

Washington Scene . . . By George Dixon

Military Voters for Goldwater

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MADRID—A young officer in our armed forces here in Spain has just received an almost hysterical letter from his mother in Boston. He showed it to me and said he couldn't understand what his mother was so excited about.



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"This is obviously her reaction to something you wrote her about the candidacy of Sen. Barry Goldwater," I said. "What did you write her about Goldwater?"

"Nothing sensational," he shrugged. "I simply wrote her:

"They're all for Goldwater here in this outfit. They want a war so they can get promoted."

"And it surprises you that it upset her?" I asked.

"Well," he said, "it shouldn't have come as any surprise to her that the U.S. military abroad is

preponderantly for the guy who wants us to put up a fight."

"But that isn't precisely what you wrote to your mother," I objected. "You didn't put in the qualifying 'preponderantly.' You wrote her that your outfit was 'all' for Goldwater!"

"I just wanted to make it strong, so she'd get it," he said. "I think she did."

I TOLD the young officer I had found no such preponderance for Sen. Goldwater among American civilians stationed abroad as he claimed for the military. He replied that civilian employees of the U.S. Government could not see the situation in the same light as the military.

"But look here," I argued. "You didn't really mean it, did you, about our fighting men wanting a war so they can get promoted?"

"I mean," he declared doggedly. "You just go around the world and talk to our military. You'll find out."

I didn't go around the world, but I covered a

considerable portion of Europe and talked to as many members of our armed services as I could draw into private conversation.

There's no possible doubt about it. Our military people in Europe are preponderantly for Goldwater.

THE SURPRISING thing is that this seems to be the case in the ranks almost as much as among the officers. I couldn't make any assessment, however, as to whether it's the result of officer indoctrination or some conclusion the enlisted men have arrived at independently of their superiors.

The military abroad is making a feverish drive to have every eligible member of the armed services cast absentee ballots. This could have a profound effect on the elections. It begins to look as if our candidates should give some thought to campaigning in Spain and Germany as well as Maine and California.

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